

# The Distinguishing Marks of Christ's Sheep



**John 10:4-5, 27**

- We started a Series “Getting to Know the Voice of God” (John 10:1-5, 27)
  - Purpose – to make us aware of the Holy Spirit involvement in our daily lives. To help us become sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit leading and direction for our lives.
  - Goal – to strengthen our relationship with the Holy Spirit so that our life and our witness will glorify Jesus Christ.
  - Spiritual Principles – Authority, Organization, Grace, Obedience, Faith, Agreement
  
  - Review:
  - How to Recognize a Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing - Matthew 7:15-23
  - In this passage of Scripture Jesus gives a strong warning to His disciples and every true believer of Jesus Christ to beware of false prophets.
  - He also gives us clear instructions on how to recognize or detect the false, fake or counterfeit that present themselves as spokesmen for God. (Matthew 7:15-23)
1. Jesus Christ is addressing the issue of deception by false prophets and false professors (false followers) whose claim doesn’t line up with Jesus Christ and His Word.
  2. Jesus Christ warns every believer as well as encourages us to examine, test, inspect, to look at the evidence and not just what they claim.
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- Notice in verse 15, “Jesus says, “Beware of false prophets...”
1. The word “beware” means watch out, take heed, be on guard, guard against, or keep yourself from.
  2. The word “beware” when given is meant to draw or signal the attention of the hearer of any present or future danger that lies ahead.
  3. Jesus reveals their true nature and their attempt to camouflage themselves in order to appear harmless and innocent. How do they present themselves? Jesus tells us (vs. 15).

- (vs. 15) – “who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”
  - A wolf in sheep’s clothing is symbolic for someone who outwardly looks harmless, but inwardly they are full of deceit, corruption, hate and evil intentions.
1. They appear outwardly as ministers and sheep of God.
  2. But inwardly they are “ravenous or ferocious” wolves who seek only to devour and destroy people lives.
  3. Jesus teaches us the best way to distinguish the false prophets from those who have been truly sent by God – is by their fruit. Jesus said, “You shall know them by their fruit.” (vs. 20)
  4. You cannot always distinguish a tree by the outward leaves, but you can always distinguish a tree by the fruit it bears. (vs. 20)

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### John 10:4-5, 27

- Being a follower of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with a particular group or denomination (Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, Holiness, etc.) – the truth of the matter those were created by man and not by God.
1. What makes us different from any other religion or religious group is our relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ who is our True Shepherd and hearing God’s voice. (John 10:27)
- As true believers, we serve the True and Living God – we serve the King of kings and the Lord of lords and His name in Jesus Christ.
1. As true believers we have the greatest privilege of knowing, serving, worshipping, hearing, fellowshiping, and communing with the Almighty God through a relationship with Jesus Christ.
  2. As true believers we have the privilege of hearing His voice.

3. As true believers we have a Savior in Jesus Christ, who knows us by name and call us His own.
  4. As true believers we willingly and obediently follow Him.
- A. The believer's effectiveness as a true disciple and witness for Jesus Christ will be determined by these three things – It's not just being saved. (John 10:27, John 14:16-17)
1. Hearing His voice (inner voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to our spirit man).
  2. Walking in obedient to Him.
  3. Follow His leading and guiding.
- B. In biblical times the shepherd did not drive the sheep like cattle – He led them. How did the shepherd lead them?
1. By the sound of His voice. The sheep will not follow by watching the shepherd. They will only follow by listening to the sound of the shepherd voice. They went where they heard the shepherd's voice.
  2. It's impossible for believers to follow the voice of the Holy Spirit unless we hear and recognize His voice.
  3. As believers we have to hear His voice before we can follow – that's what make us the sheep of His pastures.
- C. There are Three things to know about Hearing God's voice.
1. Hearing God's voice is personal. Why? We were created by God to be in relationship with Him. (Genesis 1:26-28, 7)
    - When a believer hears the voice of the Holy Spirit, it brings such joy and comfort, because you know that God is talking personally, intimately, and directly to you.
    - The way a believer hears God's heart and mind is through the counseling of His Word. (Matthew 4:1-11, Romans 10:17, 12:1-2)
    - It is the Holy Spirit who breathes life into every believer who was once dead in their sin and trespasses and into the Word, making it a living voice for us to hear – this is known as "rhema".

- It is a continuing, proceeding word of God for that given moment, time, and for that given situation. That “rhema” word is spoken directly to us by the Holy Spirit to our spirit man.
  - The “rhema” word when spoken by the Holy Spirit has life changing and life sustaining power. (Ephesians 2:1, John 6:63, Romans 8:11, 2 Corinthians 3:6, 1 Peter 3:18, Psalm 119:105)
2. Hearing God’s voice is intangible. (Jeremiah 29:13, 33:3)
- Hearing God’s voice is not restricted or limited to a church building, church activity, church choir, the pastor, or your prayer partner. God can use anything or anyone to speak to us. (Numbers 22:12-33)
  - If we are going to hear from God, we have to remove all the crutches in our life. Where we are left only with a personal and intimate relationship with the Lord.
3. It is the Holy Spirit who comes to organize our life by organizing our spirit and our spirit organizes our mind. (Romans 8:5-14, 12:1-2)
- (vs. 14) – For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.
  - The word “led” means continuing present tense or regularly. The believer is to be regularly or continually led by the Holy Spirit. These are known as God sons.
  - This should be the lifestyle of every believer - following the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26, Psalm 37:23-24, Psalm 32:8, Isaiah 48:7)
  - Jesus Christ, our greatest example, was not only empowered by the Holy Spirit but He was also led by the Holy Spirit. (John 4:3-14, 27-29, 39)

#### D. What are the Benefits of a Believer Hearing God’s voice?

1. They receive personal direction for their lives. (John 16:13)
2. They receive words of encouragement for others. (Ephesians 4:29-30)
3. They are able to achieve great things for the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:8)

4. They receive strength and courage to persevere. (Isaiah 41:10, 43:2, Philippians 4:13, Romans 8:28)
  5. They are able to pray effectively. (Romans 8:26-27, Jude 20-21)
- E. When a believer hears the voice of the Holy Spirit, it assures them of six things: (1) God's purpose, (2) God's promise, (3) God's power, (4) God's peace, and (5) God's protection. (6) God's presence. (Psalm 23:1-6, 91:1-11)
- God has proven Himself to be faithful in the good times and even the worst of times in our lives. (Psalm 34:1-3)
  - God has proven Himself to be faithful in the present and not absent in the midst of war, famine, flood, and even storms. (Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:9, Isaiah 41:10, 43:1:4, Romans 8:38-39, Psalms 46:1)
3. Hearing God's voice is in the present.
    - Religious people always talk about what God used to do. What is God doing and saying to you right now presently? What experiences do you have with God today?
    - True believers talk about the Lord, it not just from past experiences, but present experiences – they can share with others about what the Lord is doing in their lives right now!!
    - True believers know that God is always present. (John 14:16, Psalm 46:1, Matthew 28:20, Hebrews 13:5, Psalm 139:7-10)
    - The God we serve is not just the God of our past and future, but He is the God of right now!!